



Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1209  
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Testimony for Public Hearing  
Transportation Committee  
February 11, 2015

S.B. No. 262 AN ACT CONCERNING PERIODIC INSPECTIONS OF PUBLIC  
TRANSIT BUSES

My name is Jaroslaw Pizunski. I am the President/Business Agent of Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 1209 in New London. I am also a full time bus operator, and I'm testifying today on behalf of Southeast Area Transit (SEAT) drivers, dispatchers and service line employees in strong support of Senate Bill 262, an act concerning periodic inspections of public transit buses.

ATU has nine local unions spread out across Connecticut, where we represent nearly 2,000 transit and school bus workers. The majority of our members are employed by Connecticut Transit. Our International Union, with nearly 200,000 members throughout the U.S. and Canada, also supports this bill, noting that Connecticut has an opportunity to lead the way with model transit safety legislation.

Quite simply, this bill would require transit buses owned or operated by municipalities or transit districts to be inspected periodically. Quite frankly, we are amazed that such requirements are not already in place.

SEAT has recently had a series of close calls that could have ended tragically. If the public was aware of these issues, they would be rightfully alarmed. We have had issues regarding brakes, steering, and electrical problems on our buses.

In September of 2014, SEAT sent a "Safety Alert" to all operators regarding loose lug nuts. I have a copy of the alert here and would like to submit it for the record.

While checking for maintenance issues during pre-trip inspections and during the shift is all well and good, common sense tells us that from time to time, it is necessary to do a routine, top to bottom, thorough inspection of these vehicles to look for long-term wear and tear.

We reported our concerns to the CT DOT and we were told correctly that there is no statutory or regulatory requirement for inspection of municipal vehicles by state agencies. Unfortunately, DOT also told us that it "does not see the need for such legislation and would not support such a proposal at this time."

We believe that this is shortsighted thinking. Transit drivers and maintenance employees are very concerned for their safety as well as the well-being of the riding public. This is a proactive effort by organized labor to get ahead of a tragedy. With the recent catastrophes at nearby Metro North, we know all too well that when it comes to transit safety, there is no limit on how far we should go to protect riders.

While our personal automobiles, school buses and intercity buses are subject to inspections, transit buses are not. Are some lives more valuable than others? We too carry precious cargo.

Thank you for your consideration of our views. I would be pleased to answer any questions.



Jaroslaw Pizunski  
President/Business Agent  
ATU Local 1209

# SAFETY ALERT

To: All Operators.

From: Philip Andrews, Operations Manager. *Philip Andrews*

Cc: General Manager. Maintenance Manager. File.

Date: September 23, 2014.

Re: **Loose Lug Nuts**

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## ALL OPERATORS:

Recently a disturbing trend has developed that requires everyone's immediate attention. Within the last three months, three buses have had loose lug nuts, two of the buses were in service the other was identified during the Operators pre-trip inspection. As a result, of yesterday's event the bus sustained significant damage.

Operators, as a reminder when doing the pre-trip inspection you must check the lug nuts by physically touching them to make sure they are not loose, also check the lugs periodically during your shift. Gloves will be in the dispatch office for anyone who wishes to use them. If you should discover a loose lug nut, pull the over to a safe location and call dispatch.

## INDICATION OF LOOSE LUGS:

- Shiny area around the rim, nut and stud.
- Wear indicator (paint on the stud and rim) are not aligned
- Rust around the stud, rim and lug nut.
- Vibration: Is a strong indicator there may be loose lugs pull over to a safe location and check.

Please feel free to contact my office should you have any questions concerning this SAFETY ALERT.